THE CHARM OF HOLMAN HUNT

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The Charm of Holman Hunt

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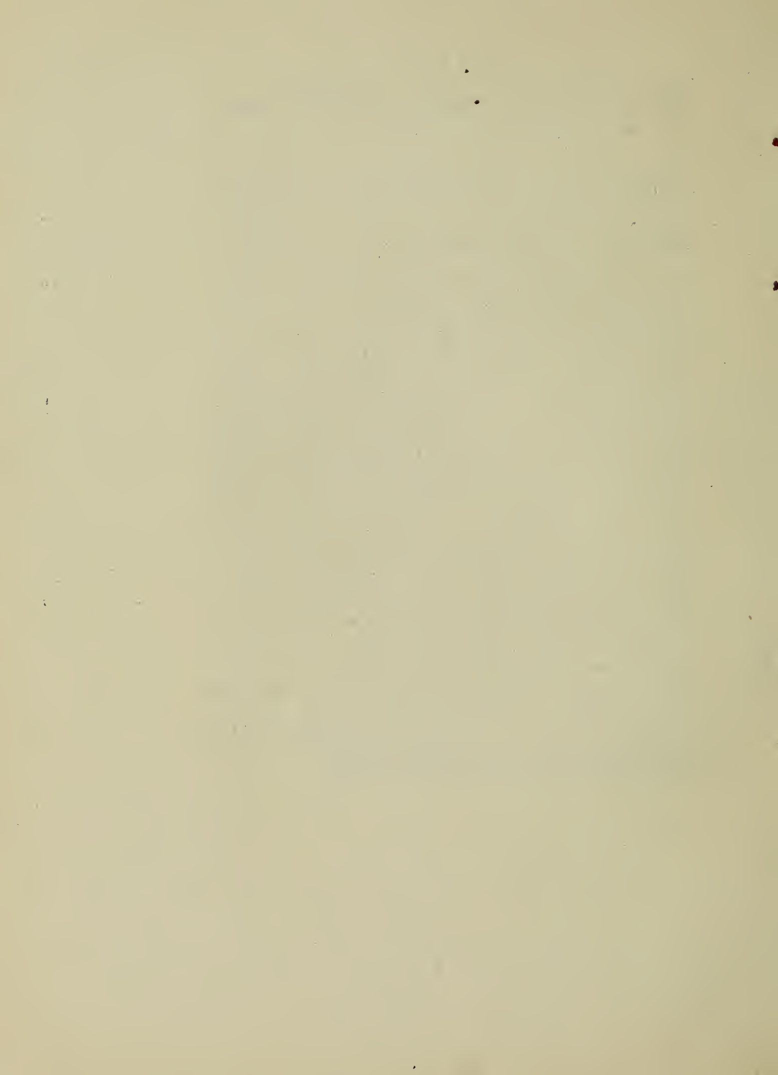
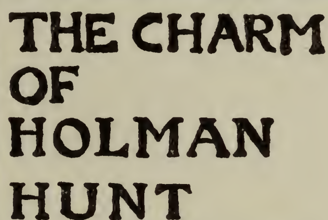
Two Gentlemen of Verona

Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1851, this splendid canvas was originally entitled "Valentine and Sylvia." It is, of course, a scene from Shakespeare's play. The dramatis personæ are Valentine and Proteus, rivals for the love of Sylvia; Sylvia, with whom Proteus had eloped; and Julia, whose love Proteus had won, disguised as a page, who followed them. The incident—the rescue of Sylvia from Porteus—is as dramatic as the version of the painter is graphic. The splendour of the costumes, the heightened colour on the faces, and the whole *mise en scène* are brilliantly illuminated by the hot Italian sun. Ruskin describes this picture as "one of the most splendid in the world"; it is one of the chief masterpieces of the Pre-Raphælite School and remarkable for absolute faithfulness of balance in arrangement, colour, and illumination. Miss Siddall, afterwards the wife of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, was the model for Sylvia. The background was painted from a forest glade at Knowle Park in Kent. Mr M'Cracken of Belfast was the first purchaser for £168, but it was sold at Christie's in 1887 for £1000. "Valentine and Sylvia" now hangs in the Birmingham Art Gallery.




THE CHARM
OF
HOLMAN
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By J. EDGCUMBE STALEY

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The Charm of Holman Hunt

I. HIMSELF

Himself.

HOLMAN HUNT's story has been told by himself in his remarkable book—"Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood." His father, Mr William Hunt, was a merchant of London residing in Wood Street, Cheapside, and there, on April 2nd, 1827, a little son was born to him and his good wife, who was baptised at St Giles', Cripplegate, and named William Holman. Mr Hunt's business prospered, and, when his boy was three years old, he moved his family to Dyer's Court, Aldermansbury. The warehouse was a great roomy building and not an attractive place for children's games, so the little boy and his fellows played up and down the busy streets. One dwelling had a great fascination for the

Himself.

child, the abode of a poor scenic painter who was, for long, busy with a weird subject, "The Burning of the Houses of Parliament." His colours, gold, scarlet, and black, he laid on lavishly, and the more wildly the painter splashed them on his canvas, the more delighted was young Hunt, until he became, so to speak, glued to the window-pane of the decorator's workroom. Whenever his parents missed him they had no difficulty in discovering his whereabouts, and they noted the early bent of his inclination.

Mr Hunt had artistic tastes; he drew well and also dabbled in paint, and, moreover, he was an enthusiastic collector of works of art. The years passed by, and at twelve it became necessary to choose the lad's place in the world, for his father intended him for a business life. When asked what he wished to be, without the slightest hesitation he replied, "a painter." Art was a poor sort of career in those days, and an artist was a

man of no position or promise. No, the *Himself.* boy was put into a friend's office and initiated in the mysteries of bills and parcels. His master, Mr James, soon found out his youthful clerk's instinct. Far from discouraging him he actually advanced his ambition by giving him his own box of oils and brushes, and, further, told him how to mix his colours, and, when business was slack, allowed him to pay visits to the National Gallery and British Museum.

After four years' grind in the city, and finding his father still obdurate, he made up his mind to be an artist even if he was turned out of his home. The declaration of his intention produced a crisis, for he told his parents that he would seek his own living and make his own way. They yielded at last, and three days a week the lad worked at the British Museum and three days he drew and painted at home. Unaided he set out to gain a probationership at the Royal Academy Schools. Two years in succession

Himself. he failed, but he plodded on—curbing, in the best way he could, his naturally hasty and impatient temper. Then came another rendering of the old story of Cimabue and Giotto—the title-rôle being taken by himself and a clever lad of fifteen, who had won the Gold Medal at the Royal Academy—John Everett Millais. Hunt was working away among the classical sculptures in the British Museum when a well-dressed boy stopped and looked attentively at his drawing, and passed on. Hunt presently packed up his carton, and taking his way through the room of the Elgin marbles, beheld the good-looking young student busy copying the Ulysses. . . . Millais—for he was the well-dressed boy—turned and asked him why he was not a pupil at the Academy? Hunt told him he had tried and had failed. "Don't be disheartened, anyhow," replied the younger boy, "but try again!" The examination was at hand and Hunt passed. This was the beginning of a rare friendship which had great results.

The Light of the World

Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1854, is the best known of all Hunt's work. Ruskin characterised it as "the most perfect instance of expressional purpose with technical power which the world has yet produced." The background was painted in a farm-house orchard at Ewell, and was executed by moonlight, and when that failed, by candles, between the hours of 9 P.M. and 5 A.M. The kingly and priestly robes of Christ registered His rule over body and soul; the lantern illustrates the Psalmist's ascription, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." The fast barred door stands for man's obstinacy; the weeds are the token of his indolence. The halo is the most expressive of all Hunt's nimbus strophes; he only yielded slowly in this idealising of naturalism. People said "Light of the World" was painted to please high-church people, to which section of the Protestant Church Hunt belonged, but Hunt denied the accusation. The picture was finished in Millais's studio, and the world of fashion gathered to discuss its merits. Mr Coombe, Millais's friend and Hunt's, purchased it for £400. On his death his widow presented it to the chapel of Keble College, Oxford, and there the original painting still hangs. Some years after the canvas exhibited damage done by its position over hot-water pipes, and Hunt repainted it and at the same time made a copy somewhat larger: this is at St Paul's cathedral; it was painted for Mr Charles Booth the philanthropist, who presented it to the nation.

Millais's studio-room, in Gower Street, had *Himself.* a second tenant and Hunt was also free of board in Millais's house. Mr Hunt had been unfortunate in business and his son was now thrown completely upon his own resources. He drew, in what spare time he had, portraits of his neighbours and fellow-students, and copied pictures of all kinds: these he sold for what anybody would give and so, with the invaluable help of Mr and Mrs Millais, he contrived to pay his way. It was very up-hill work, and not until he was twenty had he sufficient means to take a room for himself. At length he found a damp, dark, hokey-pokey, third-floor back in Cleveland Street. Millais clung to Hunt and Hunt to Millais, and when Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in 1847, applied to Hunt to be admitted to his studio as a pupil, he found himself under *two* masters—a most happy circumstance for all three. Two pictures by Hunt determined Rossetti's action—"Woodstock" and "St Agnes' Eve," painted in 1846. The latter,

Himself. in particular, appealed to the ardent young Italian as "the best picture of the year."

At the time of the "Woodstock" sale the two lads were at Ewell, camping out. To Hunt that delightful Thames-side retreat was Elysium: he had not been able to pay visits to the country, for narrowness of means and taciturnity of temperament had kept him from all such enjoyments. His valise contained two book treasures, which now he had time to devour — Ruskin's "Modern Painters," which he read night and day until the words echoed in his brain —and a torn copy of Keats's poems, which he had picked out of a Fourpenny Job-lot box. The two friends seized upon "The Eve of St Agnes" as the most fascinating story, and Hunt insisted upon reading it aloud whenever they were busily at work. His voice was not very musical, and he had, besides, a mournful manner, so that Millais, at last, cried out, "Shut up, it's like a parson preaching!"

It was, however, a merry time for ardent *Himself.* students, and in the set were the Rossettis, Stephens, and Collinson, with Woolner the sculptor. With equal enthusiasm they drew, they painted, they strove in sports, they flirted and they talked, and the result of their chattering was such as not any of them dreamed—but more about this anon. William Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti were thrown much together although they were as dissimilar as possible in disposition and manner—perhaps their friendship ripened by this contrariety! When Rossetti proposed a continental jaunt together, the poor city-sparrow lad jumped at the idea, for Rossetti was an ideal cicerone—none knew his Europe or European poetry and literature better—and Hunt himself was something of a poetaster. They went through France and the Low Countries, and paid their worship at each artistic shrine, Rossetti being the paymaster. The journey did Hunt a world of good, it shook off much of his moodishness,

Himself. and it opened his eyes upon cheerful horizons. In Paris Delaroche, Flandrin and Horace Vernet, and incidentally Ary Scheffer, appealed to Hunt; in Belgium, the Van Eycks and Rubens. He considered, however, that it would be fatal for an English student to work abroad, for it would eliminate his national feeling. He was glad enough to get back to London and join his two boon companions in the competition for the ensuing Academy. This was the first display of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the mystic letters "P.R.B." appeared upon the three canvases the young men sent in. Hunt's was "Rienzi vowing to revenge the death of his brother" a painted "bit" of Keats.

Pathetic stories are told of Hunt's narrowness of means. The "Rienzi" did not sell till quite the end of the Exhibition, and meanwhile the poor painter's landlord had seized his books, his furniture, his clothes, and more precious still, his sketches, for arrears of rent.

Himself.

At one time he could not afford to buy a postage stamp and the clothes he wore were so shabby, that, when he went to Lambeth to paint the background of his picture "Claudio and Isabella," the porter who carried his paraphernalia was the better dressed of the two. To gain a pittance he undertook to clean Rigaud's frescoes in Trinity House. "I stood," he said, "upon a springy plank, daubing away at Father Thames with a big whitewasher's brush." Hunt's ill success was echoed in the city, when one of his father's acquaintances laid a wager of £10 that any picture he offered to exhibit would be returned within a week as worthless! Debt held the unhappy fellow's right hand and failure his left; not a picture, not a portrait, not a sketch could he sell.

Perished with cold and half starved, Hunt saw that his artist days were numbered, and that he must seek his livelihood in another direction—indeed he determined to emigrate

Himself. to Canada and try to turn his ill luck as a backwoodsman. He had not, however, reckoned with his best friend's devotion—for Millais once more took him by the hand, shared home and studio with him, and paid his debts. Together they went off to Surbiton and on to Ewell, Millais to paint his "Ophelia," and Hunt, grasping his nettle courageously, to rough out his "Hireling Shepherd." Whilst thus employed the tide of misfortune turned, for a letter came to Hunt from the Liverpool Exhibition which told him that his "Valentine and Sylvia" had gained a £50 prize, as the best painting sent in for competition.

Pulling himself together the prize-winner threw his whole soul into his new venture, which he drew and coloured as though his pencil was pointed with gold and his brushes dipped in liquid sunshine. Finished, "Hireling Shepherd" was a great advance upon all he had done before: he put in practice every device he could conceive. For example, he

Himself.

drew and painted simultaneously, in one hand, so to speak, he held his pencil, in the other his brush. His early drawing depended for its special charm on the most open and simple management of transparent colours, later it largely depended upon the flexibility of his pigments in yielding to the slightest pressure. His art displays great feeling for beauty: he was eager to produce imitative rather than decorative colour. Consistently he preferred to paint from poor models than from richer types—as being more natural and more sympathetic and less prone to pose and show. None could dispute the richness, aye, the lavishness, of Hunt's palette: even, in his times of deepest penury, his colours glowed with brilliancy and generosity. His paints were always the best that money could buy: he went short of a meal many a time for the sake of a colour-tube he wanted. Time has already vindicated this speciality: his pictures are to-day as brilliant as when painted fifty and

Himself.

sixty years ago. The method of painting he adapted so successfully was as follows: he covered the whitest canvas procurable with fresh white paint, mixed with amber and copal varnish, he allowed the pigment to dry and cake like stone and then upon it he drew his design. Then he again covered his fatted canvas with fresh white paint, and smoothed it with a palette-knife, so that the drawing showed faintly through. Upon this wet paint, with the lightest of sable brushes, he put on transparent layers of colours. This produced a certain brilliancy of effect which was heightened by his keeping his canvas *wet*—this was the secret of Hunt's gorgeous colours.

The "Light of the World" had no sooner illuminated many pseudo-critical and neo-hostile minds, and greatly enlarged the fame of its creator, than he took a step which marked a supreme period in his life and in his art a crucial phase. Always seriously disposed and affected by religion, Hunt deter-

mined that he would forsake the literary inspirations of the poet and seek new impressions in that land where the prophets had revealed the World's Light-bearer. Early in 1854 he bade farewell to the Brotherhood, in spite of the protests of his friends and against the emphatic advice of Ruskin, who chided him for yielding up the express purpose of his life's work. All alone he traversed France and stayed not his course till he felt the rolling waves of the Mediterranean lapping the wooden walls of his cabin, en route from Marseilles to Egypt and Palestine—a Voice from the Holy Land was in his ears. His itinerary took him past pyramids, by diaibeah, down the Nile to Damietta, and hence to Jaffa and Jerusalem. Weird adventures met him by the way. False fellaheen and shifty Arabs recalled to him the story of the "Good Samaritan," whilst pick-pockets and cut-throats everywhere proved the value of a revolver ever on the cock!

Himself.

Himself. The free life in the open air re-established the traveller's health and spirits: he was never so fit, and the only worry he had was whether the first number of his Syrian Bible should deal with the Old Testament or the New. A visit to the Dead Sea decided the matter. No narrative in the Pentateuch appealed to him more strongly than "The Scapegoat": this then should form the prologue of his religious drama. His Pre-Raphaelite sense of simplicity of treatment and of splendour of colouring was intoxicated by the supernal afterglow upon the crude unbroken waste. These strange glories were all his own, but the goat was the difficulty. No one resented the setting up of the painting-tent, but no one was ready to sell, or lend, the animal, and all the dusky denizens of that moribund land looked on inquiringly. At last a poverty-stricken fellow came along, and, after an incantation to the shade of Moses, allowed Hunt to lead his old grey goat over the sea-salt

sparkling shore. Hunt was regarded as a magician. *Himself.*

"The Scapegoat" finished, the painter-tourist pushed on to Jerusalem, meditating by the way what to paint as a Gospel pendant to his witness to the Law. The Temple architecture and the living movements of Christ's day were focused in Hunt's brain by the incidents of his life in the Holy City, and he settled on the attractive story of Christ among the Doctors for the second number of his Syrian Bible. This was a stupendous undertaking, and occupied in execution five years, off and on. Hunt assumed Syrian dress and lived among the Jews, he read every manuscript upon which he could lay his hands, and communed in secret with the wise men of Jerusalem. He watched people and their ways, he studied things and their bearings in detail, and drew ceaselessly in pencil and in colours.

The success of "Finding Christ in the

Himself. Temple" was remarkable. It was hung in the Academy and drew hosts of admirers and some money offers. Ruskin affirmed that Hunt "had fought his way triumphantly through the neglect and obloquy of the past." Wilkie Collins went to Hunt and asked him how much he thought the picture had cost to paint. When he hesitated, Collins said—"Why, man, you must put £5,000 upon it; but you go and consult Charles Dickens, who is much more of a business man than I am." "How long have you been doing it?" demanded Dickens. "Six years," replied Hunt. "Well," he said, "make Collins's sum guineas!" And so it was, for after many nibbles and lengthy negotiations, Mr E. Gambart purchased the canvas for £5,500. "Poor" Hunt was no longer poor; his long lane of ill success and penury was ended, and Thackeray chaffed him at the Cosmopolitan Club as "The Temple Crœsus!"

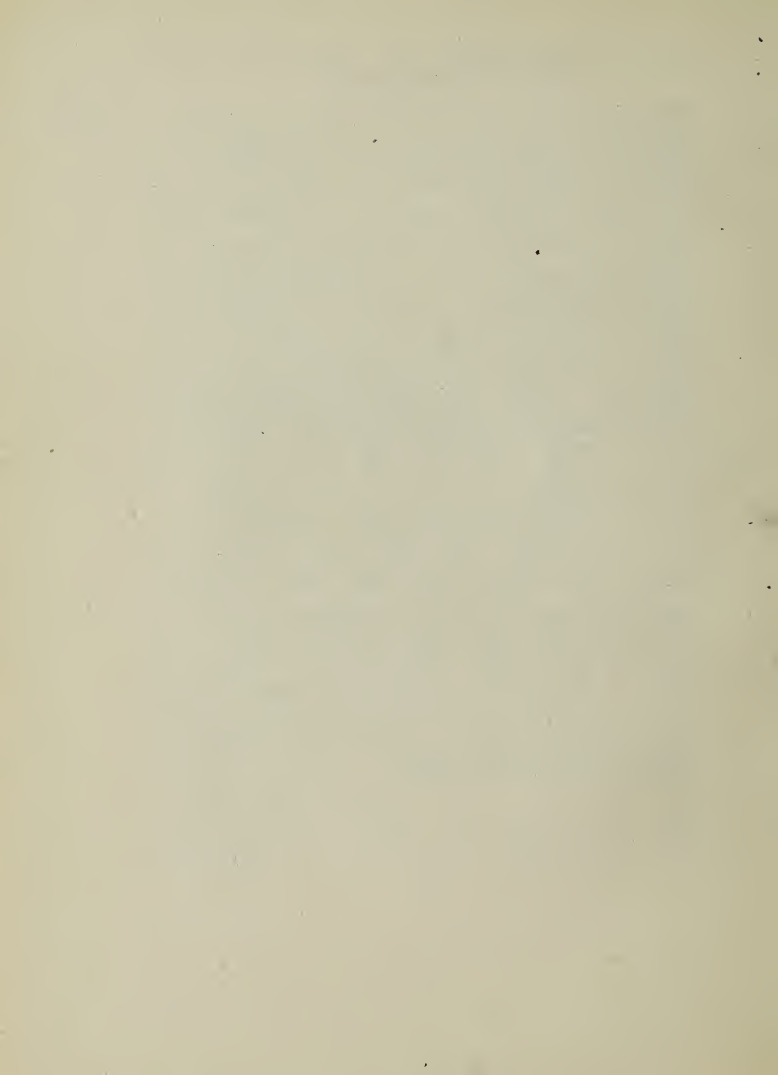
Hunt had put aside all thoughts of

marriage—love in a cottage did not appeal *Himself.* to him—he preferred "well-buttered bread." Now, as universally, "Cash and the Woman" became the order of the day, and in 1864 a stalwart groom of thirty-eight led to the hymeneal altar a youthful, blushing bride—Fanny Waugh. Her portrait, by her loving husband, shows a sweet thoughtful face with full dark eyes and a mouth like Cupid's bow. Her hair is plainly tired, and she is dressed with quietness and grace. The honeymoon was spent in Paris, and then Mr and Mrs Holman Hunt set up housekeeping together in Campden Hill. What a happy man was Hunt, but, alas, how brief was his happiness! In the autumn of the following year they started off for the East, but Egypt being closed to foreigners, they made their temporary home in Florence, where Mrs Hunt nursed her baby-boy, Cyril, for three short months, and then she died, leaving a broken-hearted husband to bewail her loss and to mother her sweet babe.

Himself. After the death of his wife, Hunt returned to England to arrange various family matters, and to confide his little son, whom he had borne pathetically home wrapped in a blanket, to the care of kindly friends. Then he returned to Florence to design and erect a noble monument to the late partner of his heart. With him travelled Mr and Mrs Coombe, those friends in need of all the "Brotherhood." On they went to Venice, and there the disconsolate widower met his champion of the pen—John Ruskin, and with him held sweet and soothing converse—they had not seen each other for twenty years. But once more the cry of the East sounded in his ears, and he again trod the beach of Jaffa in 1869. On to Jerusalem he went, to paint some more tender mysteries of Christ, and there to dwell till 1874—this was his last pilgrimage. "The Shadow of Death" revealed the wounds of his stricken heart, and at the same time, gave his countrymen one of the most

The Scapegoat

Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1856. This *chef d'œuvre* of Hunt's art was originally called "Azazel": it was painted near Oosdoom on the Dead Sea. He writes thus in his Autobiography: "Every minute the mountains became more gorgeous and solemn, the whole scene unlike anything portrayed. . . Skeletons of animals, which had perished in crossing the Jordan and the Tabboth, had been swept down and lay salt-covered, so that birds and beasts of prey left them untouched. It was a most appropriate scene for my subject and each moment I rejoiced more in my work." "The Scapegoat" took the painter quite a long time to complete, but the Hanging Committee of the Royal Academy at once placed it upon the line. Madox Brown and Rossetti went into ecstasies: the former wrote "Only genius, out of an old grey goat and some saline incrustations could make one of the most tragic and impressive works in the annals of art"; whilst the latter spoke of it as "a grand thing, but not for the public." Nevertheless the picture created an immense sensation and Hunt received many offers for it, and at last he sold it for £450 to the late Sir Cuthbert Quilter.



appealing and popular canvases by a British painter. *Himself.*

Love of country was ever a ruling passion in the lives of all the "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood," and Hunt felt heart-yearnings to return to the land of his fathers. At Neuchatel, in Switzerland, he was met by his dear wife's sister, Edith Waugh, and he married her privately—a marriage which was as fortuitous as it was comforting. Two dear children were the issue of this union, Gladys and Hilary, and them he drew and painted many a time. Their innocent ways and beauteous forms gave realism to a composition he had projected at Bethlehem, which he finished and named "The Triumph of the Innocents." This is the English dream-like version of the miraculous flight of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to Egypt; it is one of the most charming fantasies ever sung in pigment. The crowd of guardian angels of the conventionalists give way to a company of little infant children, full of frolic, to them Jesus

Himself. kisses His hand as a token that He is one of them.

Hunt now laid down his brush and put away his palette, and for seven years he all but disappeared from the circle he had loved. His last paintings of importance were "May Morning at Magdalene College, Oxford," and "The Lady of Shalott," in 1889, and "The Holy Fire," in 1892. The pioneer of the glorious Pre-Raphaelite campaign now ceased to paint, and for eighteen years William Holman Hunt was a name and little more. He and his wife dwelt happily in Melbury Road by Holland Park, and there, in his sick room, his dimmed eyes were gladdened, when a gracious Sovereign, Edward VII., sent him the supreme mark of genius, "The Order of Merit." In 1910. without ceremony, all that was mortal of the founder of a great National School of Painting was borne in solemn progress to a flower-decked grave. The evening sun was casting golden beams athwart that

quiet resting-place, and glories, no more vivid than the painter's colours, glinted upon the brief name-plate, as, over his burial casket, the dust of death was scattered.

Himself.

. . . . . .

In personal appearance William Holman Hunt bore traces of Scottish lineage. The portrait which he painted of himself at the age of fifteen shows a chubby, reddish-headed youngster, with great grey-blue eyes and a ruddy, fresh complexion and high cheek bones. When Sir W. B. Richmond painted him fifty years later he has still the northern cast of features, with masses of grey hair and a noble flowing beard. His aspect is most benevolent; he wears a seraphic smile, and his eyes, now deeper set, beam out beneath bushy eyebrows. He might indeed be one of the Prophets of Holy Writ—a peaceful pose at eventide after a storm-tossed life.

Of William Holman Hunt and his art no

Himself. truer epithet or epitaph can be conceived than the aphorism which he himself put forth. "There is no immortality for humanity except that which has been gained by man's own genius and heroism."

II. HIS SCHOOL

His School.

The Romance of the "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood" is as fascinating as anything in the living annals of Art. The stout web of youthful enthusiasm is interwoven, in the narrative, figuratively, with the coloured warp of an ideal hobby, whilst the roving needles of love and beauty throw up here and there glittering strands of gold and silver. It is the story of such a galleon of pleasure as Etty conceived but hardly realised: youth and beauty in the prow, skill and daring at the helm.

Who could have imagined that three boys, possessed of no specially favourable auspices, would be the founders of a new and unique school of British painting, and, withal, would withstand and beat down the legions and the lies of official conventionalists; but so it came to pass. The theme of the texture

His School. which they art-handicrafted is on this wise: at Ewell—that sweetest eyot of the Kingston Thames—in the summertide of 1848, three town-bred lads, art students all, flushed with premature success and aspiring other painting bays to win, forgathered. They were busy drawing, painting, chatting, and incidentally flirting, in the open, their forms mingling with the meadow grass and the sedges of the river banks, their eyes flush-lighted by the beauties of bounteous Nature.

The subject of conversation was the hopeless conditions of that seraphic Art to which they had dedicated themselves. Their academic studies and the lines laid down for them to follow were like the arid sands of the tawny, lifeless desert and the graceless wrinkles of withered human features. What they had seen in galleries and museums of the work of the great foreign masters of the past taught other lessons which they were eager to elaborate. The three lads and many others of their ilk who had joined the

bivouac were blessed with poetic natures. *His School.* The Muse which moved them was the muse of the Chaucer-Shakespeare-Spenser trilogy, and whilst she spoke tenderly through generations of sweet poetasters, her voice was to them most inspiriting when uttered by their favourite singer, Keats. In him they discovered their cue, and whilst they recited him under the orchard trees, he drew back the curtain of curiosity and revealed to their wrapt intelligences the passions of Italian Art.

Back to work in town, the three leaders —Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti—foregathered in Millais's studio, and rubbed heads and shoulders well together as they conned delightedly the portfolio of engravings, which favouring chance had cast in their way, of the frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli upon the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa. By unanimous vote they agreed to follow that gracious master and re-establish their own art in his. They cast their eyes sympatheti-

His School. cally upon the glories of the Della Robbia in terra-cotta and upon the romances of Sandro Botticelli in pigment—they used them for their scaffolding. Truth to tell, they had, of course, an enthusiastic craving for Raphael Santi's exquisite outlines and for his delicious colouring, but his religious conventions and his ubiquity awed and bored them. No, they would resist the fascinations of his art and build theirs upon the simpler lines of his precursor.

The august company of protagonists for freedom and naturalism numbered at their first census seven "Immortals," and thus they ranged the order of service. William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and his brother, William Michael, Frederick G. Stephens, Thomas Woolner, and James Collinson. They called themselves "The Pre-Paphaelite Brotherhood," and they chose Hunt for Prior, and for Scribe, William Rossetti. Succinctly they announced their aim—"the exposition

Isabella and the Pot of Basil

It does not appear that this picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy; probably Hunt did not wish it to be a peep-show for philistines. The circumstances of its painting were sad enough: the artist and his dear young wife were at Florence in 1866, where, after the birth of her only child, she sickened and died. It was said Hunt used his wife as model, and indeed there is much similarity between the features of Isabella and Mrs Hunt's portrait painted by her husband in 1864. The incident in print, once again from Keats's poems, is of course Isabella's ceaseless watch over the precious head of her lover, which she had discovered in the forest and had borne home in her silken scarf. She placed it in a costly porcelain bowl, and then planted fragrant basil over it, fit emblem of the sweet life laid down. The pose of the figure suggests the person of the weary dying bride lying painfully upon her couch, her head upon a pillow. The draperies and all the accessories are very fully and beautifully rendered in the richest colours, but the illumination is subdued—a dark cloud had hidden Hunt's brilliant sun. "Isabella" was bought by Mr E. Gambart, who placed it on exhibition and employed G. Blanchard to engrave it. "Isabella" belongs to Mrs James Hall of Newcastle-on-Tyne.

of pure naturalism." To fix the manner of their art they determined each and all to make a series of designs from Keats and to exhibit at the Royal Academy the tokens of their cult. Hunt and Millais were first in the field, the former with his "Rienzi vowing to avenge the Death of his Brother," the latter with "Lorenzo and Isabella—the Banquet scene."

His School.

By way of expansion of the nucleus-statement of their cult, the "Brotherhood" added this corollary—"the chief thing in a picture should be the incident, not the actors." Hunt now issued a sort of manifesto to the world at large: "All Art is a branch of that spirit of appeal from the Divinity to the Universe which has been working ever since our kind knew its opportunities for good and evil." Thus these young enthusiasts became philosophers as well as painters, and their philosophy immediately laid hold of astute minds and unbiassed opinions, whilst the methods they proceeded to adopt in the preaching of

His School. their creed raised, as might have been expected, unreasoning and illogical opposition. The next step taken by the "Brotherhood," whose ranks had been strengthened by the accession of William Bell Scott, Arthur Hughes, Thomas Seddon, W. L. Windus, and W. H. Deverell, was the promulgation of a "List of Immortals," which Hunt drew up. Beginning with Jesus Christ it included "The Author of Job," Homer, Dante, Spencer, Boccaccio, Alfred, Shakespeare, Chaucer, Lionardo, Thackeray, Goethe, Keats, and Browning. This bold venture led on its promotion to another literary enterprise, the publication of "The Germ" as the official monthly of the "Brotherhood." Its existence unhappily was ephemeral, for, upon the first number, its authors sustained a loss of thirty-five shillings, and that trifling deficit spelt ruin for their limited exchequer. The foreword of this bantling was grandiloquent. "We, of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, have set ourselves to illustrate themes which

we consider convincingly to be connected with the pathetic, honest, laudable, and sublime interests of humanity." *His School.*

Pre-Raphaelitism advanced by leaps and bounds, licked into shape and concreted by the sharp blows and hard knocks showered upon its exponents and their work. Adversity and opposition invariably produce a sturdy brood! Whilst authorities at the Royal Academy, and critics in the Press, stormed and raved, painters and art-lovers were mightily affected by the enthusiasm of the youthful Apostolate. Ford Madox Brown, staggered by what they exhibited in 1851, "which," as he has recorded, kill everything else in the Academy," threw in his lot with the "Brotherhood," being convinced by Hunt's "Two Gentlemen of Verona" and "The Hireling Shepherd," Millais's "Mariana in the Moated Grange" and "The Woodman's Daughter," and Rossetti's "Annunciation." His own, "Christ washing the Disciples' Feet," he painted after the same

His School. manner—a dazzling canvas. Following close on his heels came tripping W. H. Deverell, with his "Lady and her Bird-cage in a Garden," J. F. Lewis and his "Courtyard of the Coptic Patriarch's Palace in Cairo," William Dyce showing "St John leading the Virgin Mary from the Tomb," R. B. Martineau and his tragic "Last Day in the Old Home," A. L. Egg and "Beatrix Knighting Esmond," and E. Burne-Jones with his "Story of Galatea" and "The Beggar Maid." It was at Oxford that Millais enlisted the last-named student of romance and his fellow-conscripts, William Morris, craftsman-poet, and A. C. Swinburne, the laureate of the "Brotherhood."

With Hunt the movement was a religion and a reality, and his seriousness and magnificance were anchors which held the galley of Pre-Raphaelitism safe and sound through stress and storm. Burne-Jones offering the incense of his Art at the Shrine of Hunt acclaimed him "the greatest genius upon

earth"! In the preface of his "Autobiography" Hunt wrote as follows: "The office of the artist should be looked upon as a priest's service in the Temple of Nature, where ampler graces are revealed to such as have eyes to see. . . . It was no idle fancy of Keats that to be first in beauty is to be first in might. In the circle of the initiated a colourless world is suffused with prismatic radiance." Further on he deals delightfully with the antecedents of the "Brotherhood": "When we," he writes, "of the P.R.B. were charged with exaggeration in the key of colour, and were told that our pictures had all the hues of the rainbow, we replied that the brown shadows of our old professors did not give the impression of open-air effects. Therefore we registered prismatic hues because we found that each technical feature mirrored the blue sky and the tints of the neighbouring creations, and we maintained that while a part of our picture by itself might appear supercoloured, it was

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His School. consistent in the impression it gave of truth."

Throughout the infancy of the "Brotherhood" Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti maintained a sort of *imperium in imperio*, both in print and sport. They gave in their adhesion to the Cyclographic Club, which had enrolled all the Pre-Raphaelites as members, but, when they came to think the matter over, they agreed to recede "because none of the other members had any talent!" This divergence of standing led the three leaders to more complete separation and isolation. Millais was the first to abandon the platform of the "Brotherhood" and Rossetti soon followed suit. Hunt alone remained in solitary dignity the central pillar of the Temple of Pre-Raphaelitism. With respect to Millais's defection Hunt writes thus in his "Autobiography": "Millais and I had thought of husbanding only our own fields, but the outspoken zeal of our companions raised the prospect of winning wastelands, and of gain-

ing for the 'Brotherhood' new realms, such as should be worthy of the race." The failure of the Cyclographic Club was a blessing in disguise; forth from its ashes rose, phœnix-like, another society which its members, artists and amateurs, named after the reputed father of British painters "the Hogarth," whose motto was Hunt's sententious aphorism: "The eternal test of good art is the influence it is calculated to exert upon the world."

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Dante Gabriel Rossetti uttered one while the startling prophecy: "Can you not understand that there are hundreds of young aristocrats and millionaires growing up, who will be only too glad to get due direction how to make the country as glorious as Greece was, and as Italy?" These words were indeed pregnant of the future, for a phalanx of painters have gone on painting the Pre-Raphaelite panorama ever since Edward Burne-Jones and Ford Madox Brown laid down their palettes and were numbered in

His School. the immortal "Vale of Rest" of Millais. V. C. Prinsep, John Pettie, Frederick Walker, Frank Holl, Charles W. Furse, Frank Brangwyn, F. C. Cowper, Frank Craig, Frank Dicksee, T. C. Gotch, J. Young Hunter, Henry Wallis, and John W. Waterhouse are but a section of British artists who look to William Holman Hunt as their leader and their guide. Sharp indeed are the rulings of Providence; some men die young, their work undone, others outlive their fame and working days. At the end of his "Autobiography" Hunt says: "The purpose of Art is, in love of guileless beauty, to lead men to distinguish between that which, being clean in spirit, is productive of virtue and that which is flaunting and unnatural and productive of ruin and despair."

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